

## OPEN LETTERS.

### *Astragalus lanocarpus* and *A. bajaensis*.

It seems necessary to notice an ill-advised personal attack which Professor E. L. Greene has made upon me in a recent number of *Erythea*. Professor Greene's failure to keep pace with modern Latin scholarship, pardonable indeed in his case, has betrayed him into an uncalled for display of language.

The trouble seems to be that Mr. Greene objects to such a specific name as *lanocarpus* in the combination *Astragalus lanocarpus* lately published by me. I understand him to profess that the name is compounded of words taken from two languages. And because Mr. Greene has not been properly instructed that *carpus* is a good Latin word, he makes his personal attack upon me. In some moment of mental illumination I hope he will be sorry for this. He intimates that I "lack a grammar school education." He writes that I "have assumed that a mere beginner in systematic botany may unblushingly announce himself an authority upon so large and difficult a genus as *Astragalus*." That I am a mere beginner is true, although I have made systematic botany my principal occupation for about ten years. That I have announced myself as an authority is wholly untrue. I challenge Mr. Greene to produce a published word of mine in which I have made any such announcement. I consider myself but a student of the genus, and I assure Mr. Greene that upon his failure to produce proof of his unfounded statement, I shall expect a full and abject retraction.

So much for Professor Greene's lapse from courtesy. Regarding "carpus," I beg to refer Professor Greene to page 95 of vol. II of Furlanetto's splendid six volume work, "*Totius Latinatis Lexicon, opera et studia Algeidii Forcellini*," where he will find "*carpus*, genitive *carpi*, m. from Greek *karpos*." He will also learn that this word occurs in Roman inscriptions of the Empire period. He will discover that while earlier and insufficient study had excluded the word from the Latin vocabulary, later research has shown its place to be as unquestionable as *brevis*, for example, which is also from a Greek root. Yet Mr. Greene does not object to *brevifolia* or *breviflora*. Furthermore, he will learn that the Romans themselves used the compound word *omnicarpus*.

Briefly, then, *carpus* is a good Latin word, *cuspidocarpus*, *lanocarpus* and the rest are correctly formed, and in trying to change them, Mr. Greene has given birth to abortive synonyms.

The other mistake of Mr. Greene concerns the specific name *bajaensis*. *Baja*, he objects is a Spanish adjective, meaning *lower*. This is true, but it is also a substantive. *Baja*, for example, is the name of a town in the state of Coahuila, Mexico. Therefore, *bajaensis* is correct, just as *nevadensis* is correct.

I hope that this will show Mr. Greene the insecurity of dogmatism.  
—EDMUND P. SHELDON, *University of Minnesota*.